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DINING IN NEW YORK 1664

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Excerpts from the book "Food Of Our Forefathers"
by Gertrude I. Thomas (F. A. Davis Co., Philadelphia)

By 1664 New Amsterdam was a town of fifteen hundred people, definitely Dutch in appearance, customs and food habits. The dooryards were gay with flowers grown from seeds and bulbs from Holland . . . tulips, hyacinths, narcissus and daffodils . . . hollyhocks, lilacs and white daisies . . . and they showed great interest in their herb gardens. The Dutch home was incomplete without a neat little vegetable garden in the rear. They had kitchen gardens, and kept chickens and geese.

The Hollanders delighted in good food. They accepted the native corn dishes of the Indians and the available food of the early days, such as oysters, venison, turkey, wild geese, watermelon and muskmelon. They set out their orchards of apple and peach trees, which were cultivated with great care and success. Peach, plum and cherry trees were abundant. They had a great variety of vegetables, carrots, peas, chicory, lettuce, beets, cabbage, cucumber, parsnips and radishes, together with the pumpkin, squash and beans inherited from the Indians.

The Dutch farmer grew good grain, and his goede vrouw had a hand with her pastry. They erected windmills to grind the wheat and pump the water for the fields.

Available old letters comment on the fine apples, and the horse press that was used for making cider. This drink was diluted with water, flavored with nutmeg, and rivaled the use of beer.

The deep, dark cellar with its favorable temperature provided an excellent place to store provisions. Here were bins of root vegetables and apples, kegs of cider and vinegar, corned beef and fish, ferkins of good butter and lard, pigs' feet or souse, and the jars of preserves stored away against the winter. Fish was salted and meat was chopped for sausage and head cheese.

Hogs gave the Dutch a variety of menus. Head cheese was an economical preparation. The Dutch turned so frequently toward milk and cheese that some of the early writers referred to them as "milk and cheese men." Shredded cabbage, dressed with vinegar, and known today as cole

slaw, is a vegetable contribution from the Dutch kitchen.

Pasties, or small pies filled with oysters, lobsters, crabs, venison, or meat from domestic cattle, were frequently served.

There was always an abundance of butter and cheese to be used with dark bread.

They did not have forks in any number, but used knives and spoons made of wood or pewter.

They were a fundamentally happy people, and lived well in their quaint houses at peace with themselves and their neighbors.

On the whole, the Dutch had come to New Netherland better provided with the comforts of life than the other colonists, and the early inventories record household possessions of chairs, tables, cupboards, mirrors, pillows, curtains, bedsteads, blankets, glasses, carpets, desks, stands; utensils of brass, pewter, leather and iron; clocks and fine fireplace equipment. The goede vrouw had chests of linen, and her cherished possessions were her Delft earthenware, her Oriental china, and her silver plate.

New Amsterdam was up at dawn, had dinner at noon, and tea or supper at night. There was always a hot meal at noon.

It is quite possible that the general afternoon tea drinking came by way of Holland. New Amsterdam was the first to make a social custom of tea service. It (tea) came from Java and brought a very high price, some tea sold for \$100 a pound.

The water supply came from wells with wooden pumps, and the water was brackish and not palatable. This led to a company in New York erecting a tea-water pump to obtain pure water for tea making, and the water was peddled around the streets. The tea vendors became so numerous that they were a nuisance, and laws were made to regulate the trade.



1664 RECIPES

RUNSDERLAPPEN

- 2 pounds round steak cut into 1/2 inch thick slices
- salt
- pepper
- 1/2 cup vinegar
- 4 cloves
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 red pepper

Brown steak slices in butter. Put in a stewing pan. Add a little water to melted butter and pour this gravy over the sliced meat. Add vinegar, cloves, bay leaves and red pepper. Stew for one hour. Thicken gravy slightly with flour. Serve steak with gravy.



DUTCH MEAT BALLS

- 2 pounds ground chuck
- 3 eggs
- 4 oz. bread crumbs or soaked bread
- pepper
- salt
- ground nutmeg

Squeeze water out of bread if this is used instead of crumbs. Add salt, pepper and nutmeg to meat. Mix bread well with meat. Beat in the eggs. Form mixture into balls. Fry in about 6 ounces of butter for 3/4 hour, turning balls in the pan. Before serving add water to make a gravy and spoon gravy on meatballs.

